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INSPECTOR GENERAL

Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP82-00357R000200070021-4

21 September 1978

Executive Registry

78-1728/4

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: John H. Waller  
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Dissent

1. Action Requested:

It is requested that you approve the attached announcement concerning dissent for inclusion in an early edition of the Director's Notes.

2. Background:

Following the discussion which took place at the 19 September 1978 meeting of the EAG, I was requested to draft for your approval a message about dissent suitable for distribution via the Director's Notes. A draft is hereto attached, as is a copy of the memorandum jointly drafted by Mr. Taylor and me on dissent, in preparation for the 19 September EAG meeting.

I will also forward to you soon a companion piece on the new grievance system.

John H. Waller

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Attachments - 2

APPROVED: (Approved by DdI 27 Sep 78) Date

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

DISAPPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

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CHANNELS FOR DISSENT

The principal method for the expression of dissent within the Agency involves the various avenues available within each Directorate for challenging or testing analysis, policy and procedure. This is a process which must take place in a routine yet vigorous fashion if our products and activities are to be maintained at a level of high quality. The squelching of divergent views on significant issues can lead to intellectual stagnation and second-rate performance. It is important, therefore, that employees be made to feel that presentation of well-reasoned dissenting views on significant substantive issues in the normal course of their work is not only tolerated but is welcomed by enlightened line managers. It is also important that each Directorate publicize its philosophy on dissent, as well as its methods for processing it.

There are occasions when employees may feel that valid views on matters of particular significance have not received adequate consideration by line management. In such cases, an employee may believe -- rightly or wrongly -- that the Director or Deputy Director should be informed of divergent opinion which could have an important impact on significant analytical, operational, or managerial issues. The Director and the Deputy Director encourage the submission of

such dissenting views directly to them in writing and have asked Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ to make certain that such papers are given expeditious handling and made available promptly to them for reading.

It is important that dissent not be confused with personal grievances or complaints, for which a different procedure exists. While dissent can be defined as an expression of significant substantive opinion at variance with formally accepted positions within the Agency on analytical, operational, or managerial matters, a grievance is a request by an employee for relief from dissatisfaction with career matters, working conditions or burdensome administrative decisions which affect the employee personally.

While there may be special circumstances in which a dissent should be registered confidentially, the real value of dissent lies in the open airing of an issue and the intellectual debate it stimulates within a Directorate.

Dissent should, of course, be confined to matters within the Agency's field of competence and authority. While there may be foreign policy decisions, for example, with which some of our people disagree, this Agency does not make foreign policy, thus it is not profitable to use our forums to air such disagreements, nor would it be appropriate to encourage dissent on matters which are the proper province of other agencies or departments.

Employees are assured that submissions of dissent will be seriously reviewed and responded to appropriately. The Director and the Deputy Director consider dissent by employees to be expressions of legitimate and healthy concern for the achievement of superior performance by this Agency. It can play a vital role in maintaining the intellectual integrity and validity of Agency products and practices.